

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION SHEET

SARS TESTING

There are currently two tests available for the detection of SARS-CoV infection in humans. In Massachusetts, these tests are available **only** at the MDPH State Laboratory Institute (SLI) with confirmation provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The tests include:

- o Enzyme immunoassay (EIA) and immunofluorescence assay (IFA) for the detection of antibodies in serum, and
- o Reverse transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) for the detection of viral RNA in specimens from the respiratory tract and other samples.

These tests are considered investigational; therefore, a reasonable effort must be made to obtain informed consent from patients before collecting samples for testing.

All cases of suspected or probable SARS should be reported to the MDPH Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at 617-983-6800 prior to sending samples for testing. Suspect cases of SARS will be reviewed and a determination will be made regarding testing.

Laboratory Testing For SARS

Laboratory testing for SARS-CoV will be performed at the SLI, and will be approved on an individual basis upon consultation with MDPH staff. The MDPH Division of Epidemiology and Immunization staff can be reached 24 hours per day, 7 days per week by calling 617-983-6800.

Testing criteria will vary depending upon whether or not cases of SARS exist in the world. SARS laboratory testing criteria, and specimen collection information are detailed in the *SARS Surveillance and Response Plan for Massachusetts*, available on the MDPH website at www.state.ma.us/dph, or by calling 617-983-6800.